



Victoria County, TX

<u>Position Title:</u>	Assistant Public Defender I	<u>Effective Date:</u>	9/1/24 - Until Filled
<u>Department:</u>	Crossroads Defenders (CxD)	<u>Status:</u>	Regular, Full Time, Exempt, In-Person
<u>Pay:</u>	\$75,000+ Depending on Experience	<u>Apply:</u>	Email Resume and Cover Letter to bw@cxdtx.org

CROSSROADS DEFENDERS

The Crossroads Regional Public Defender's Office, a.k.a Crossroads Defenders (CxD), is a new, holistic public defender's office serving Victoria, Jackson, Lavaca, and Refugio Counties. CxD represents indigent clients in criminal cases ranging from Juvenile Offenses through Non-Capital Felonies. Crossroads Defenders aims to become a model office for rural defense in Texas. The office will leverage cutting-edge technology, training, and techniques to provide the strongest possible advocacy for our clients. Additionally, the office will provide wrap-around services for clients to assist them with employment, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and immigration issues.

The Victoria County Public Defender's Office seeks a dedicated and passionate attorney to represent indigent clients charged with misdemeanor and juvenile offenses and assist with felony representation. The Assistant Public Defender I will be responsible for providing high-quality legal representation, ensuring that clients' constitutional rights are protected throughout the criminal justice process.

VICTORIA, TEXAS

Victoria, Texas is a jewel in the Texas Coastal Bend region, where past and present are perfect neighbors. Victoria offers a perfect blend of big city amenities while maintaining small-town charm. The city boasts a deep history, plentiful outdoor recreation, and a thriving arts and entertainment scene. Victoria also features diverse culinary options, a strong economy driven by healthcare, education, and manufacturing, and an affordable housing market. The city is served by top-rated schools in the Victoria Independent School District. With Houston, Austin, and San Antonio just a two-hour drive away, Victoria is truly the crossroads of Texas. For those seeking a high quality of life, rich history, and abundant opportunities, Victoria is the perfect place to call home.

["Past. Present. Future. A Reflection of Victoria's 200 Years."](#)

[Explore Victoria Texas](#)

JOB SUMMARY

The Assistant Public Defender I at Crossroads Defenders (CxD) is responsible for providing high-quality legal representation to indigent clients facing misdemeanor and juvenile delinquency charges. The APD I will manage a significant caseload, conducting thorough investigations, developing effective defense strategies, and zealously advocating for clients in court proceedings. This position requires strong trial skills, excellent communication abilities, and a deep commitment to protecting the rights of the accused. The APD I will work collaboratively with the CxD team, including investigators, social workers, and support staff, to provide holistic, client-centered representation. The ideal candidate will have a passion for justice, a dedication to serving poor communities, and the ability to thrive in a fast-paced, challenging environment.

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

- Manage a caseload of misdemeanor and juvenile cases, providing high-quality legal representation to indigent clients.
- Assists senior and felony attorneys with non-capital felony cases as required.
- Conduct thorough investigations and develop effective defense strategies for each case.
- Zealously advocates for clients in court proceedings, including hearings, trials, and sentencings.
- Draft and file legal motions, briefs, and pleadings.
- Negotiate plea agreements with prosecutors when appropriate.
- Collaborate with investigators, social workers, and support staff to provide holistic, client-centered representation.
- Conduct legal research and stay updated on changes in criminal law and procedure.
- Represent clients in mental health dockets as needed.
- Prepare and conduct jury trials and bench trials.
- Handle appeals as directed, with assistance from appellate attorneys.
- Be open to mentorship and training opportunities.
- Participate in training and professional development activities.
- Maintain client confidentiality and adhere to ethical standards of the legal profession.
- Engage in community outreach and education efforts related to criminal justice issues.
- Assist in developing office policies and best practices for indigent defense.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM SKILL LEVEL

Professional - The characteristics and duties of an APD I are professional in nature and includes work providing highly developed planning or implementation of professional activities requiring the application of advanced knowledge and communication skills, research, data analysis, client assistance, and/or other activities.

This includes:

- Familiarity with Texas Criminal Law and Procedure
- Skilled at working with diverse and incarcerated populations
- Skilled at drafting complex legal motions, briefs, and pleadings
- Fully proficient with modern technology
- Candidates should be comfortable using email, text messaging, presentation software, Microsoft Office, and legal research programs.

MINIMUM EDUCATION

- *Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) (PhD Equivalent) + Bachelor's Degree*
 - Represents comprehensive study of the specialized and complex field of law, which requires extensive independent research and creative work; ability to write and edit complex theoretical and informational material; ability to define and resolve complex and intricate problems and to develop corresponding theories.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE

1. Minimal Experience (less than 1 year) sufficient to enable the attorney to acquire some familiarity with the methods and procedures found in common work situations in the legal field. May be less than one year of related experience.
2. Skilled advocate, familiar with oral and written advocacy
3. Capable of exercising sound legal analysis and judgment.
4. Able to establish and maintain good working relationships with clients, court personnel, and co-workers.
5. Must possess the skill and ability to manage a demanding and diverse caseload assigned from the Chief Defender.

MINIMUM LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, OR REGISTRATIONS

1. Licensed to practice law in the State of Texas (or immediately eligible to obtain licensure/awaiting bar results).
2. Valid Texas driver's license and reliable motor vehicle.

WORK LEVEL AND WORK COMPLEXITY

1. **Work Level - Senior**
 - Senior level work which requires handling advanced tasks and problems;
2. **Work Complexity - Complex**
 - Work will be widely varied and involve many complex and significant variables, requiring analytical ability and inductive thinking in adapting policies, procedures, and methods to fit unusual and complex situations. This position requires a high level of mastery and calls for legal experts. It requires the direct handling of all assignments and problems, including developing policy, procedures, and best practices in the field of work.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND HAZARDS

The characteristics listed below are representative of the physical demands, physical agility, sensory requirements, and environmental exposures required by an individual to successfully perform the essential duties of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties.

- **Physical Demands**
 - Light – Requires light physical effort working almost exclusively with lightweight materials (up to 25 pounds) or short periods in difficult work positions (e.g. moving banker's box).
 - Employees sit most of the time but may walk or stand for periods of time.
 - This is light duty work requiring some physical agility such as: climbing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching, pushing, pulling, repetitive motions and manual dexterity.

- o Sensory requirements include standard vision requirements, ability to convey detailed or important instructions to others accurately, loudly or quickly, and standard hearing requirements - hear information at normal spoken word levels.
- **Working Conditions and Hazards**
 - o Disagreeable (Level 4) – This position will be exposed to hazards such as close, prolonged, and frequent contact with potentially violent, drug addicted, and/or mentally ill clients, co-defendants, and witnesses.
 - o Serious mental effort and stress is involved which could result in tension, anxiety, and mental anguish.
 - o This position requires visiting incarcerated clients at county jails and prison units.
 - o This position requires visits to crime scenes, businesses, and private residences that are not under Victoria County control and may pose safety and health risks.
 - o This position involves legal confrontation of law enforcement, prosecutors, and those with significant amounts of social, political, and legal power. This may result in the targeting of the employee, and present an ongoing threat to life, liberty, and personal freedom.
 - o Position requires outdoor walks to the courthouse, less than ¼ mile, exposed to the elements

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- This position requires continuing contacts involving difficult, and frequently life-altering, negotiations calling for a well-developed sense of timing and strategy and detailed explanation and interpretation of laws, policies, rules, regulations, and/or the handling of very difficult interpersonal relationships, including representing the department or organization in policy settings.
- Attorneys will have regular interaction and communication with:
 - o Clients facing a broad range of serious criminal and civil legal issues
 - o Appellate, District, County, and Administrative Judges
 - o Felony, Misdemeanor, and Juvenile Prosecutors
 - o Elected Officials and their staffs
 - o Police Officers, Investigators, Probation Officers, and other agents of the criminal legal system
 - o Expert Witnesses including psychiatrists, psychologists, physicians, and other professionals
 - o Citizens, including jurors and witnesses

LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPACT OF RESULTS

- **Broad:**
 - o The work, by its nature and scope, is subject to functional policies and goals under general managerial direction.
 - o Independently manages a diverse caseload of misdemeanor and juvenile cases, ranging from minor offenses to more serious charges that could result in significant jail time or juvenile detention.
 - o Develops case strategies and makes key decisions on plea negotiations, diversion programs, and trial tactics with minimal direct supervision.
 - o Interprets and applies relevant statutes, case law, and juvenile code to craft defense strategies tailored to each client's unique circumstances.

- o Exercises discretion in balancing high-volume caseloads, prioritizing cases based on urgency, complexity, and potential consequences for clients.
- o Collaborates with social workers, education advocates, and mental health professionals to develop holistic intervention plans for juvenile clients.
- o Represents the office in various court proceedings, including arraignments, motion hearings, trials, and dispositional hearings.
- **Primary**
 - o Major individual impact on and accountability for end results affecting organizational unit, involving dire and serious consequences for both clients and our office. The impact of actions will have profound and life changing results, good or bad.
 - o Outcomes of cases directly impact clients' immediate freedom, criminal records, and future opportunities, particularly crucial for young offenders.
 - o Effective advocacy in juvenile cases can significantly alter a young person's life trajectory, potentially diverting them from long-term involvement in the criminal justice system.
 - o Successful negotiation of diversion programs or alternative sentencing can prevent clients from facing incarceration and its associated long-term consequences.
 - o Identification of constitutional violations or procedural errors can lead to case dismissals, setting precedents that affect office-wide strategies.
 - o Advocacy for mental health or substance abuse treatment instead of punitive measures can lead to better long-term outcomes for clients and the community.
 - o Performance in high-volume courts influences the office's reputation and relationships with judges, prosecutors, and other court personnel.
 - o Effective representation in school disciplinary hearings (often tied to juvenile cases) can significantly impact a client's educational opportunities and future prospects.
 - o Success in suppressing evidence or challenging police practices in misdemeanor cases can have ripple effects on law enforcement procedures.
 - o Skillful handling of domestic violence or DUI cases can affect not only the client's legal status but also their family relationships and employment.
 - o Advocacy for sealing or expunging juvenile records can profoundly impact a young person's future education and employment opportunities.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

- None

BENEFITS

In addition to a competitive and stable County Salary, full-time employees will receive full Victoria County Benefits including:

- Low-cost health, dental, and vision insurance.
- Prescription drug coverage and optional FSA.
- Enrollment in the Texas County and District Retirement System with a guaranteed 7% rate of return, 200% match, and a lifetime benefit after the vesting period.
- Tuition Assistance
- Discounted membership to Citizens HealthPlex Gym and Spa
- Optional Group Rates for Term Life, AD&D, and Disability Policies.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Victoria County, and Crossroads Defenders, is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to creating a strong and welcoming workplace. We encourage applications from qualified individuals of all backgrounds. Crossroads Defenders believes that an intellectually and experientially diverse team enhances our ability to provide the highest quality of legal representation to our clients and community. We strive to create an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and supported in their professional growth. We welcome and celebrate the unique perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to our team.

<https://www.vctx.org/page/employment>

Please email resume and cover letter: Attn: Brian Watson bw@cxdtx.org